



# **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY STATEMENT**

**Mount St Joseph Document Control Table**

Document Title :	Attendance and Punctuality Policy Statement	Author name / post:	Director of Pastoral
Version Number:	1	Document Status:	Final
Date Approved:	April 2018 (Version 1)	Approved By :	Governing Body
Effective Date :	April 2018	Date of next review:	April 2020
Publication method:	Website Reference Drive	Date published	April 2018
Superseded Version:			

**Document History**

Version	Date	Notes on Revisions
1	April 2018	Approved by Governors April 2018
1.1	September 2019	Reviewed and updated by P Draper

## Rationale

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all students at Mount St Joseph to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. For this, it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Excellent school attendance is necessary to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their full potential. The DfE guidelines on *Improving Attendance at School* state that "students who have over 95% attendance achieve five or more good GCSEs at grades 9 to 5". Excellent attendance also shows potential colleges and employers that young people are reliable and resilient.

Students with poor attendance who miss out on lessons are vulnerable to falling behind. Research indicates that children who frequently miss school, attending less than 90%, often underperform in exams compared to students who have good attendance records. At Mount St Joseph, every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to education law which is monitored by the School and the Local Authority, not only to support attainment but also to safeguard young people. We appreciate the support of all our parents/carers in encouraging their child to attend school regularly.

The table below is a guideline for attendance; it is based on percentage attendance for a **whole school year**. It gives an indication as to whether attendance is currently impacting on your child's potential attainment and future achievement.

100% Attendance	No absence from School all year	<b><u>Outstanding Attendance!</u></b> These students will most certainly achieve their full potential
Above 97% Attendance	Absent from School for less than 6 days	<b><u>Excellent Attendance!</u></b> These students are highly likely to achieve their full potential
95-97% Attendance	Absent from School for less than 10 days	<b><u>Good Attendance</u></b> Students have a good chance of achieving their target grades but absence from School will jeopardise this
Between 95 and 90% Attendance	Absent for up to 20 School days	<b><u>Attendance is a cause for concern</u></b> Attendance will be monitored by School and this amount of absence will make it difficult to achieve their full potential
Between 90 and 80% Attendance	Absent between 20 and 40 days from School	<b><u>Attendance is a major cause for concern</u></b> Missing so much time from School means that studies cannot be completed and it is very unlikely that students will achieve their target grades. Fines may occur for parents/carers as a consequence of this level of attendance.
Below 80% Attendance	Absent for more than 40 days in a School year	<b><u>Attendance is now a serious concern for the School and the Education Authority</u></b> Underachievement is likely to occur in all of the student's studies. Fines may occur for parents/carers as a consequence of this level of attendance.

## Overall Aims of the Policy

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated within school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.

- To provide an environment in which students feel safe, secure and valued and to ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the School's attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and attitudes to ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents/carers, students and staff receive regular communication about the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance data to inform action planning.
- To have policies and procedures that are in place to monitor the causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of students and to address them.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and School so that parents/carers work in partnership with the School by attending meetings, liaising where appropriate and being informed of absence procedures.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.
- To issue sanctions, including legal action from the LA where deemed necessary for persistent absenteeism and persistent lateness.

## **Expectations**

### Parents/Carers

- To ensure and encourage children to attend regularly and punctually, and be in School before or no later than 8:30am every morning.
- To telephone the School on the first morning of your child's absence, and provide explanations for any subsequent absences.
- To endeavour not to take children out of School in term time for leave or medical appointments; if medical appointments have to be made in school time, evidence must be provided (letter/ appointment card).
- To attend meetings in school and work in partnership with the School to ensure their children understand the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and comply with the systems and procedures established to achieve positive patterns of attendance and punctuality.
- To send children to School with the correct uniform and equipment.
- To participate in Attendance Contracts and cooperate in supporting interventions offered by school or other agencies.
- Ensure holidays are not requested during term time.

### Pupils

- To arrive on or before 8.30am for Registration each morning; and be on time for all lessons.
- If late, sign in at Student Reception and be aware of the sanction system for continuous lateness to School.
- To acknowledge behaviour needed outside of school, e.g. early bedtime, to promote good attendance.
- To attend School/Registration punctually and prepared ready to learn.
- To speak to parents/carers and teachers if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance or punctuality.
- If there is a need to leave early, and there has been prior parental/carer consent, sign out at the Student Reception and to speak to Form Tutors and Pastoral Care Officers about any problems with your attendance or punctuality.

- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by School or other agencies to promote good attendance and punctuality.

## Understanding types of absence from School

Every half-day absence from School has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED and is a legal requirement. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences that cannot be properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or other official documentation.

## Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our Attendance Team and PA pupils and their parents are subject to intervention and action plans to ensure attendance is above the 90% threshold. Note: **Where there are continued unauthorised absences parents may face legal action from the Local Authority, in line with Bolton LA Penalty Notice Procedure.**

## Prior to considering a prosecution Mount St Joseph Catholic School will ensure that:

The Attendance Policy (adopted in line with Department for Education expectations) has been followed.

- Appropriate and proportionate efforts have been made to support the student.
- Meetings are held with parents/carers with clear plans agreed. These plans should clearly state what is expected from parents/carers; be reasonable and achievable; and include what additional support will be provided by the school and, where appropriate, other agencies.
- Letters including a "final warning letter" are sent to parents/carers advising that they have failed to co-operate and that the school intends to request prosecution by the Local Authority.
- The School has given consideration of the issues that may impact on attendance. This is by no means an exhaustive list but could include:
  - Parents/carers having mental health issues or being elderly or infirm.

- The student being beyond the parents/carers control.
- Any special educational needs the student may have.
- If a student has significant anxiety issues regarding school attendance which indicates a mental health problem.
- Child safeguarding concerns.
- Poverty.

**External Agencies who maybe engaged to support improving attendance for students where significant barriers maybe present include:**

- Local Authority AWO
- School Nurse Service
- Mental and Emotional Health - CAMHS, School Counsellor
- Social Care
- Family Support
- Targeted Services
- Safer Schools Officer
- Early Intervention Team

**Leave in Term Time**

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. **There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.**

All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent/carer of residence using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional. **Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. Mock Exams, GCSE's or any other public examinations.**

**Religious Absence**

The school will authorise a one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.

**Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss assemblies, form time and lessons. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

The school day starts at 8.30 a.m. and we expect your child to be in either assembly or form at that time. Registers are marked by 8.40 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 8.50 the AM registers will be closed, this is in accordance with the statutory regulations and School policy. If your child arrives after that time they will receive a late mark to indicate they are not in School, this may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Team to explore the reasons for such lateness and to resolve the problem.

**Returning to school after a long term absence**

Students who are returning after a long term absence will be supported through a variety of strategies/interventions which may include the following: Parental Contracts, part-time timetables, home tuition, Health Care Plans, joint working with external agencies. A meeting will be held involving a representative from the school and parents/carers to decide on the level of support which will be required.

### **Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance**

**Assemblies** – The school will use assemblies' /notice boards to publically recognise, celebrate and reward students with excellent attendance.

**School/Staff Newsletters** - Newsletters will highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. In particular, it will include initiatives to promote, reward and recognise excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

**Rewards** – Presented to individual student's/form groups and Houses on a regular basis. These will be reviewed at least on an annual basis for their impact on promoting good levels of attendance and/or punctuality.

**MSJ Breakfast Club** - This supports parents/carers by allowing them to drop their children off before the start of the day, ensuring they are on time and giving our students a good start to their day with a breakfast and time to prepare for lessons.

**Form Breakfast** – To support community spirit and to help boost attendance, the form with the best attendance in a week will receive a form breakfast on the Friday of the following week.